

REMARKS

Claim 27 is amended. Claims 31-98 are added. Claims 1-30 stand allowed. Claims 1-98 remain in the application.

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the examiner's allowance of claims 1-30. For the reasons discussed below, Applicants believe the amendment to the claims herein is needed for proper protection of the invention. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request entry of the amendment.

Claim 27 is amended to cure an antecedent basis concern. Support for this amendment may be found in the specification, for example, at claim 3.

New claims 31-34 are added depending from claim 2. Support for this amendment may be found in the specification, for example, at claims 12-15.

New claims 35-38 are added depending from claim 3. Support for this amendment may be found in the specification, for example, at claims 12-15.

New claims 39-44 are added depending from claim 4. Support for this amendment may be found in the specification, for example, at claims 12-15 and claims 26 and 27, as amended.

New claims 45-50 are added depending from claim 5. Support for this amendment may be found in the specification, for example, at claims 12-15 and claims 26 and 27, as amended.

New claims 51-56 are added depending from claim 6. Support for this amendment may be found in the specification, for example, at claims 12-15 and claims 26 and 27, as amended.

New claims 57-62 are added depending from claim 7. Support for this amendment may be found in the specification, for example, at claims 12-15 and claims 26 and 27, as amended.

New claims 63-68 are added depending from claim 10. Support for this amendment may be found in the specification, for example, at claims 12-15 and claims 26 and 27, as amended.

New claims 69 and 70 are added depending from claim 16. Support for this amendment may be found in the specification, for example, at claims 26 and 27, as amended.

New claims 71-76 are added depending from claim 21. Support for this amendment may be found in the specification, for example, at claims 12-15 and claims 26 and 27, as amended.

New claims 77-82 are added depending from claim 22. Support for this amendment may be found in the specification, for example, at claims 12-15 and claims 26 and 27, as amended.

New claims 83-88 are added depending from claim 23. Support for this amendment may be found in the specification, for example, at claims 12-15 and claims 26 and 27, as amended.

New claims 89-94 are added depending from claim 24. Support for this amendment may be found in the specification, for example, at claims 12-15 and claims 26 and 27, as amended.

New claims 95-98 are added depending from claim 25. Support for this amendment may be found in the specification, for example, at claims 12-15.

Allowed claims 1-30 include 14 independent claims, claims 1-7, 10, 16, 21-25. Eight of these claims, claims 2-7, 10 and 25, were rewritten as independent as a result of prosecution of the application. Applicants now seek to have the present amendment entered such that each of the allowed independent claims in the application will have a consistent set of dependent claims. The new dependent claims recite the suture material and the direction which the barbs face. From two to six dependent claims are added, depending from each of the independent claims except for claim 1. The claims were not presented earlier due to the large number of prospectively allowed independent claims in the application and the large excess claims fee required to enter the new dependent claims.

Applicants believe that claims dependent from each independent claim and related to the suture material and the direction of the barbs is important in providing the necessary breadth of protection for the Applicants' invention.

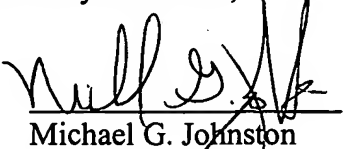
The new dependent claims related to the suture material are already present in the application as allowed claims 12-15, which depend from claim 1. The new dependent claims related to the direction of the barbs are already present in the application as an element of allowed claim 3 and in claims 26 and 27, as amended. Said claims 12-15, 26 and 27 were merely copied and made dependent from the other independent claims as needed. Thus, the new claims follow the same pattern of dependency as the prior allowed dependent claims, and there should be no editorial problems with the claims. Moreover, no new matter is added, and the claims are fully supported by the specification. The allowability of the new claims has already been established during the prosecution of the present application, and the claims are *per se* patentable because they all depend from allowed independent claims.

Accordingly, Applicants submit that new claims 31-98 require no additional search or substantial amount of work on the part of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. There should be minimal effort required of the examiner in reviewing the claims as no more than a cursory review is needed.

Applicants respectfully submit that the amendment is proper and request entry by the examiner.

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Respectfully submitted,

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